## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON IX, THIRD QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, AUG. 31.

**Text of the Lesson, Num. xxi, 1-9. Memory Verses, 6-8—Golden Text, John iii, 14, 15—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.**



1-3. He fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.

This is the story of Arad the Canaanite, who dwelt in the south. He seems to have remembered the visit of the spies and possibly at that time did some talking and threatening, but now it is no handful of men who have come; it is a whole nation that he sees approaching, and in his folly he thinks to resist them, for he knows not the Lord nor His purposes. When Abram first came to the land, the Canaanites were in the land, and 400 years later we saw them there in last week's lesson (Gen. xii, 6; Num. xiii, 29). There are about thirty-eight years between the last lesson and this one, for in chapter xx, which begins with the death of Miriam and ends with the death of Aaron, we read in verse 1 that they are back at Kadesh, where they were in chapter xiii, 26, when they sent the spies, and we know from chapter xxxiii, 38, that Aaron died in the fortieth year after they left Egypt. How little is known of those thirty-eight years! It was time lost in wandering because of unbelief, for they are no nearer the promised land now then they were in the last lesson. How many believers thus wander a lifetime on the borders of a land they never enter, and all because of unbelief! They do really put their trust in the Lord Jesus and accept Him as their Saviour, but because they cannot obtain some one else's experience and will not take God at His word they wander on lacking assurance.

4. And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red sea to compass the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

Mount Hor is memorable as the place where Aaron died. Moses, Aaron and Eleazar went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation, and Moses, stripping Aaron of his garments, put them upon Eleazar, and Aaron died there (Num. xx, 27, 28). He was not sick, but his time had come to go home, and this is the brief account of it. It was gain to him. It was very far better (Phil. i, 21, 23, R. V.). The reason they had to compass the land of Edom instead of going through it was that the king would not allow them to pass through (Judg. xi, 16, 17).

5. And the people spake against God and against Moses.

They loathe the manna and say that there is no bread and no water. So they are full of trouble because they are rebellious and unmanageable. The record concerning them is found in Ps. lxxviii, 17, 18, 19, 22, 37, 40, 41. What a record of enmity against Him who loved them and sought only their welfare! See His heart toward them in Ps. lxxxi, 10-16, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

6. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died.

The New Testament admonition in this connection is, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents" (1 Cor. x, 9). Lest any one might think that he never would be thus guilty, it is written in the context, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," and lest one might think that his trials are unusually heavy and too much to be borne see verse 13.

7. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said: We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

Many a time Moses had prayed for them, and it is written of him that "Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breach to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them" (Ps. cvi, 23). Moses and Samuel and Daniel and other great intercessors are types of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us (Heb. vii, 25; Rom. viii, 34), and there is exceeding great comfort in such words as I John i, 9, and Prov. xxviii, 13, l. c. Yet the time came when neither Moses nor Samuel, Noah, Daniel nor Job could avail for Israel if they should pray for them (Jer. xv, 1; Ezek. xiv, 14).

8, 9. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

Thus Moses did, and it came to pass as the Lord had said. He who told Moses to do this saw in it a symbol of Himself on the cross for the sins of the world, and He so spoke of it to Nicodemus in our Golden Text for this lesson (John iii, 14, 15). That old serpent, the devil, by sin has bitten our race, and multitudes are perishing, but as the likeness of that which had bitten [illegible] was put upon a pole for their deliverance so the Lord Jesus was on the cross made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. v, 21). The serpent on the pole was suggestive of a dead, not living, serpent. So in Christ on the cross we see sin rendered harmless to injure those who are in Christ. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. xv, 56, 57). As quickly as the eyes of a bitten Israelite fell upon the serpent on the pole he lived, and the moment a sinner looks to Jesus on the cross, suffering in his stead, there is life for him in Christ, as it is written, "Look unto me and be ye saved" (Isa. xlv, 22). The serpent on the pole was no thought of Moses but the Lord's own provision.

# Chattanooga

By F. A. MITCHEL, LATE U. S. A.



### CHAPTER I.

NO MAN'S LAND.

It was the twentieth of August, eighteen hundred and sixty-two. Corinth had been evacuated more than two months before. The Army of the Ohio had moved eastward into northern Alabama. The president and eminent Union generals were anxious as to east Tennessee, where, it was rumored, the Confederates were preparing for some new move.

High in the Cumberland mountains a soldier in the blue and yellow uniform of a private of cavalry sat on his horse, looking down on the valleys of the Sequatchie and the Tennessee. A carbine was slung over his shoulder; a Colt's revolver was at his hip. He was long and lithe and graceful. About him was an air of refinement seldom found under a private's uniform except during that war which called out men from all classes, both in the north and in the south. His hair was light; his blue eye was restless and denoted its possessor to be a man of great mental and physical activity.

While there was something statuesque in the appearance of the man and the horse, they presented a marked contrast, accoutered as they were for war, with the peaceful scenes before them and about them. Not a sound was to be heard up there in the mountains, except such as came from the insects or the birds. The equestrian figure mounted on its lofty pedestal was the personification of war in solitude.

*"Go, and God bless you!" he said.*

As the soldier gazed down upon the expansive view different expressions flitted across his face. At one moment there was a serious look, such as men wear on the eve of battle; at another a shrinking expression; then a dreamy one. He saw territory that lay beyond the Union lines. He wondered what warlike scenes were hidden down there within the blending of rocks and rivers and undulations, lying calm and sweet before him that summer afternoon. Were clusters of white tents there? Were brigades, divisions, army corps marching?

Now he thought he could hear a distant creaking of caissons and gun carriages. But he knew this could not be. If they were there, they were too far to be heard. The sounds never became real. The young man's fancies were always broken by the actual rustle of the leaves or some sound from the furred or feathered inhabitants of the mountains.

Then a scene he had passed through the previous evening came up before him.

He stood in the presence of a general of division—the finest specimen of physical splendor of all the generals of the Union army—one who was a year later to achieve the title of "the Rock of Chickamauga." The general was speaking while his subordinate was listening respectfully and attentively.

"I am ordered by the department commander to find out what is going on at Chattanooga. Our reconnoitering parties have thus far brought us nothing save that there is no enemy very near. We are liable to be flanked and cut off from east Tennessee. See here!" He turned to a map spread out on a pine table. "Here is Chattanooga; here the Sequatchie valley; up here to the north is Knoxville, held by General Kirby Smith for the Confederates. Here is Cumberland gap. If the enemy is concentrating at Chattanooga, he may not only hold it against a greatly superior force, but can march right along here"—he traced the route with his finger—"form a junction with General Smith at Knoxville, and into Kentucky. Louisville and Cincinnati will be in danger. Forrest and Morgan are hammering at our communications; we get reports of immense forces of the enemy at Knoxville; everything points to this or some similar plan of campaign on the part of the Confederates. If so, they must be concentrating at Chattanooga as a point of rendezvous."

The general paused; then looking the soldier in the eye said impressively:

"You are the only man to whom I can intrust so important a mission. I can't order you, as you know, beyond our lines, except in uniform. Go as far as you dare as a soldier; I leave the rest to you. Will you undertake to bring me the information we require?"

"I will, general."

"Very well. The fate of this army, the success of the Union arms in the west, perhaps the prolongation of the war, depend upon you."

The young man bowed, but said nothing.

"You will need a pass to get beyond our pickets." The general drew a camp chair beside a pine table and took up a pen. "How will you have it written?"

"'Pass Private Mark Malone'—that name will do as well as any—'beyond our lines at will.'"

The general wrote the pass and handing it to Private Malone, "Go, and God bless you!" he said. He took his emissary's hand and pressed it heartily.

As the words, "Go, and God bless you!" rang again in memory the soldier touched the flanks of his horse lightly with his great brass spurs and began to descend the mountain.

An hour later he entered the little town of Jasper. Riding up to the tavern he reined in his horse and let him drink at the rough wooden trough in front. A number of country people were sitting on the veranda, and every one fixed his eyes on the soldier, who sat on his horse looking about him with as much apparent indifference as if he were within the Union lines. When the animal had drunk his fill his rider cast the reins to a negro and dismounted. Then, detaching his carbine from where he had hooked it to his saddle, he took it in his hand and tramped into the house to the jingle of his spurs.

Not a word was spoken by those watching in admiration the strapping young fellow with so young a face set on so stalwart a frame. He paid no attention to them, but walked into the dining room and called for supper. After devoting himself to a plate of bacon and corn bread, with a cup of chicory in lieu of coffee (for the blockade of the southern ports had stopped the flow of the coffee bean from foreign countries), he walked out on the gallery, and seating himself on a wooden bench took a brierwood pipe and a tobacco pouch out of his pocket and began to smoke.

Jasper was "no man's land." The people living there and thereabout were nearly all Confederate sympathizers, but had learned to look for Union or Confederate troops with an equal chance of either. From the moment of the soldier's arrival they had discussed his coming in whispers. Soldiers of either side usually came in numbers. It was seldom that a single trooper had the hardihood to enter the town of Jasper alone, especially one wearing the blue. Presently an old man dressed in "butternut" got up from his seat among the loungers and approached the stranger for the purpose of reconnoiter:

"Reckon y' come from Decherd, Yank?"

"Thereabout."

"Over the mountains?"

"Yes."

"You uns got many sojers over thar?"

"Where?"

"At Sparty."

"No."

"Murfreesboro?"

"I don't know."

"Reckon thar's a powerful sight at McMinnville?"

"A division perhaps."

The man paused a moment and then went on:

"Thet's an all fired pert rifle o' yourn. Wouldn't mind letten me handle it, would y'?"

Mark cocked the piece, took off the cap and handed it to his interrogator. He still had his revolver, while the man had a weapon which could not be fired without a percussion cap.

"Waal, now, thet's quar."

The man looked from the rifle to the soldier, not knowing which to admire most—the mechanism of the former or the coolness of the latter. Then he handed it back.

"You ain't no Yank."

"Why not?"

"Yanks don't come down hyar all alone. Besides a Yankee sojer wouldn't ride a blooded mare like that a-one. Morgan's men rides them kind o' critters and wears them uniforms sometimes."

Mark smiled knowingly.

"You think I'm one of Colonel Morgan's men, do you?"

"Reckon yer one o' ourn anyway."

And the man walked away well satisfied with his penetration.

The soldier got up, went into the tavern and paid for his supper with one of the postal shinplasters used at the time in lieu of silver; then he came out and called for his horse. While waiting he stood leaning against a post of the gallery, maintaining the same easy confidence that had characterized him since his arrival. Presently a negro came around from the barn, leading the slender legged mare, and the soldier, sauntering up to her leisurely, stroked her neck; then mounting, without once looking at his observers, he rode away.

But private Malone's confidence was all assumed. He did not start on the road he designed to follow; he trotted off up the valley, intending later to find a path or a crossroad which would take him southward to the Chattanooga pike. He suspected that the group he was leaving would not suffer him to ride that night in safety, and he did not care to let them know his true route.

Mark trotted on up the road while the daylight was fading. He was musing upon the difficult, the hazardous task before him. The road was deserted except by himself; the evening was still, and his horse's hoofs beat loud on the stones beneath him. When he was riding in the open he felt comparatively confident, but upon entering a thicket he would uneasily reach down and put his hand upon his rifle. He knew the bushwhacker of the period, and fancied that a rifle or a shotgun lurked behind every tree. Amid the peaceful quiet of a summer evening in the country it was strange that one should look for death. None but a practiced scout would have been thus on the alert.

The twilight was nearly faded. Mark had gone about three miles from the tavern when, nearing a fork in the road, he heard:

"Halt, thar!"

Instinctively his hand went to the handle of his revolver, for the sound was near enough to indicate that a pistol rather than a rifle might be needed.

"Air you uns the sojer ez tuk supper at the tavern at Jasper?" asked a voice, singularly soft for a bushwhacker.

"Well, suppose I am!"

"I know y' from yer voice."

"How's that?" asked the soldier, puzzled.

"Kind o' deep and smoothlike. Y' mought as waal put up yer shooten iron. I got a bead on y'."

Mark could see no one, but judging from the voice of the speaker his alarm partially subsided.

"I reckoned y' mought come along hyar, so I jist squatted and waited."

"Well, what do you want with me?"

"I'm one o' the Slacks. We're Union, we Slacks air. They're goen to drive us out soon, I reckon."

"Union, eh? What are you—man, woman, boy or gal?"

"I'm a gal."

"The dickens! What are you stopping me for at the muzzle of a gun?"

"Lordy! How'd I know y'? Y' mought 'a' ben a bushwhacker. I war at the tavern whar y' tuk supper. The landlord's wife, she's my aunt. I sor y' come in and hearn y' talken to old Venables. They reckoned y' war Confederate till y' paid in Yankee shinplasters; then they reckoned y' mought be Yankee after all."

Mark began to be interested. It was now evident to him that this person ensconced behind a snake fence, holding him under cover of a gun, was a friend instead of an enemy.

"Well?"

"I kem out hyar to tell y' 'bout it."

"Then let me see you as well as hear you."

A figure with a gun climbed over the fence and advanced toward the soldier. When it came near enough Mark saw a girl who might be anywhere between sixteen and eighteen, for her skirt only reached to the tops of her shoes, and her hair was cut square around her neck. She came very near to him and spoke in a low tone:

"After y' left the tavern some on 'em 'lowed y' was Union, and some on 'em 'lowed y' was Confederate; leastaways, they wasn't sartin. Uncle, he's bad secesh, and he 'lowed y' was Union and bound on some errant fur the Yankees. So he pursuaded several on 'em ter mount 'n follow y'. They was gitten ready, and I slipped out to the barn and tuk my pony, what I rode over on this afternoon, 'n Jakey's squirrel gun (Jakey's my brother), what I allus carries when I ride round in these hyar war times, 'n I makes tracks cross country by a trail I allus goes to uncle's 'n comes hum agin while the men air comen by the road. I jest rode Sally Maria among the trees thar and tied her and squatted behind the fence till y' come along and—Lordy sakes!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Listen!"

They were both quiet for a moment, the girl's two big black eyes denoting her anxiety. They could distinctly hear the tread of horses coming on a brisk lope.

Without a word the girl seized Mark's bridle rein and led horse and rider off the road into the wood. At a short distance behind a rise in the ground she stopped. Mark was inclined to go on farther.

"No, no," she said hurriedly. "My pony's right thar. If she ketches sight o' your horse she'll whinny."

Mark dismounted, and the girl, plucking a handful of grass, held it to his horse's mouth to keep his attention from other matters that he might not neigh and betray them. The two stood looking at each other while the sounds grew louder, dreading every moment that either one of their horses might give the signal that would lead to their discovery. There were evidently not less than half a dozen of the horsemen on the road, altogether too many for one man, even if well armed, to meet.

The men rode up to the fork of the road, where they reined in their horses for a parley. It was a question doubtless which road the Yankee soldier had taken. Presently they divided, one party taking the left hand road to Tracy City, the other the road leading up the valley.

As soon as they were gone Mark took the girl's hand and gave it a grateful pressure:

"God bless you, my girl; you've saved me from capture or being shot in the back—shot, I expect."

The girl shuddered. She knew well enough the fate he would have met if his pursuers had overtaken him. They would have come upon him warily and shot him from behind a tree. When the sounds from the retreating horsemen had died away in the distance she said:

"Come!"

### CHAPTER II.

A CHANGE OF UNIFORM.

The soldier followed her, leading his horse, till they came upon her own pony tied to a sapling. Mark offered to help her mount, but she was not used to such civility, and leading her horse to the trunk of a fallen tree mounted by herself.

Crossing the road the two entered a wood on the other side. The girl kept a straight course till she came to a creek, which she forded below and near a log that had been felled across it to be used for a footbridge. On the farther side she struck an old road, abandoned, at least, for wheels. Mark rode up alongside of her. She was a wild looking thing, with hardly a trace of civilization about her except her calico dress and cowhide shoes.

"Where are you taking me to?" asked Mark.

"Hum."

"Where's home?"

"T'other side o' th' Sequatchie river."

"How far is it to the river?"

"'Bout a mile from the creek we jest crossed."

"And how far from the river to your home?"

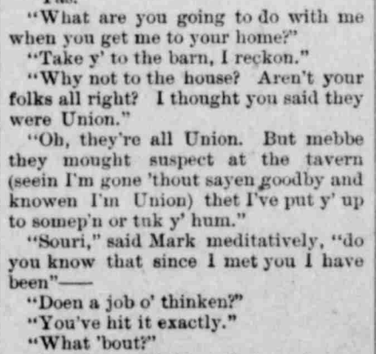
"'Bout another mile. We live on a road ez runs from the Chattenoogy pike to Anderson."

"That's well. I want to reach the pike."

"Waal, y'll only hev ter go a couple o' mile from our house t' git thar."

"You seem to know all about this country."

"Reckon I do. I was born hyar. I done a heap o' hunten in these hyar woods. I toted a gun all over 'em."



*It was the only bit of finery she possessed.*

"Tell me something about yourself. What's your name?"

"Souri."

"Souri what?"

"Slack."

"Oh, yes! You're one of the Slacks, you told me. Isn't Souri a singular name for a girl?"

"Waal, dad, he kem from Missouri. So thet's what he named me."

"Have you a mother?"

"Yas."

"Brothers and sisters?"

"Henery and Jakey."

"How old are they?"

"Henery, he's 'bout twenty-two. He's in Jim Brown's company o' east Tennessee cavalry."

"What? Union cavalry?"

"Yas."

"You mean regiment, not company. I know Brown well. How old is your other brother?"

"Jakey, he's thirteen."

"At home?"

"Yas."

"What are you going to do with me when you get me to your home?"

"Take y' to the barn, I reckon."

"Why not to the house? Aren't your folks all right? I thought you said they were Union."

"Oh, they're all Union. But mebbe they mought suspect at the tavern (seein I'm gone 'thout sayen goodby and knowen I'm Union) thet I've put y' up to somep'n or tuk y' hum."

"Souri," said Mark meditatively, "do you know that since I met you I have been"——

"Doen a job o' thinken?"

"You've hit it exactly."

"What 'bout?"

"I've been thinking that you're nobody's fool."

The girl laughed, or rather chuckled. She enjoyed the compliment and was too unsophisticated to pretend that she did not.

They soon struck a dirt road leading directly south, which they followed till they came to the Sequatchie river, striking a ford at the same time. Souri led the way into the ford, Mark following. Her pony was used to such crossings, this one in particular, while Mark's horse preferred to feel his way slowly; consequently Souri reached the opposite bank before Mark had got half way over.

It was now night, but it was clear, and a half moon cast its faint light upon the land and the river. Mark suddenly looked up from the water and saw Souri on the bank watching him. Had he been near enough he would have seen anxiety depicted on every feature of her face.

"Keep up the stream!" she called, pointing at the same time.

He turned his horse's head as she directed, but soon lowering his eyes to the water began to go down stream again.

"Look at me," she called: "don't look at the water. Its runnen makes it seem sif y' war goen straight when yer goen crooked. Thar's a ledge o' rocks below thar and deep water beyond."

Mark fixed his eyes on his guide, and turning his horse's head toward her urged her forward. She picked her way slowly, as if conscious of danger, and at last coming to the brink stepped quickly out of the water and shook herself.

"What makes you trembie so?" he asked of Souri.

"I ain't," she said, coloring.

"Is that a dangerous ford?"

"Ef y'd a-tumbled offen the ledge y'd 'a' drownded."

"I've done some scouting before this, but I see now that I haven't learned to cross a current till today. Next time I'll look out for something on shore to steer by."

Another ten minutes brought them home. They came upon the house from its rear. It fronted on the road running northward and faced east. Souri led the way to a rickety barn, where both horses were stabled. She left Mark in the barn while she went into the house to inform the inmates of his presence.

Presently she came out.

"Dad 'lows y' mought come in fur a spell 'thout much resk. They won't know o' y'r bein hyar yet awhile. Leastaways thar's no hurry. But dad reckons y' mought sleep in the barn with one eye open."

"I shall not sleep anywhere tonight. I must go on. But I'll go in with you for awhile."

A man met them at the door with white, shocky hair and a stubble beard. He looked sixty, though he was ten or fifteen years younger. He walked as if he were following the plow. His trousers were drawn nearly up to his armpits, a double breasted waistcoat served in lieu of a coat, and an old woolen hat covered his head to the back of his neck.

"Them blue clothes looks kinder peart to we uns down hyar ez ain't seen nothen but gray," said the man. "I 'lowed when you uns went up ter Chattenoogy last June and fired them big guns at the town y' was goen to hold onto these hyar parts."

"Perhaps it was a mistake," said Mark, "but I never criticise the acts of my superiors."

"Come inter th' house."

The dwelling was composed of two square log houses, some ten feet apart, under one roof, with a floor between the two. The man led Mark into one of these parts or houses. The articles in it that struck the soldier's eye were a very high bedstead, heightened further by a feather bed; a chest of drawers, and a clock on the mantle that ticked loud enough to be heard out in the barn. There were some pieces of rag carpet on the floor, two or three hard seated chairs and a rocker.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]